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NO MORE NUMBERS

We have been alerted to the beginning of the Great Lent by changing from numbered Sundays to named ones. For example, this year January 28 is dedicated to the Publican and Pharisee when the gospel reading of Luke 18:10-14 teaches us how we are to pray. The lesson is amplified in the prayers for this day: "Let us not pray, brethren, Pharisee-like, for he who exalts himself shall be abased. Wherefore, let us humble ourselves before God, crying by means of fasting, with the voice of the publican, saying, God, forgive us sinners."

The Pharisees were an old and famous sect among the Jews. Being wicked hypocrites, they hid their vices while appearing to be very virtuous, doing all their good deeds where they could be seen by other people... (St. Matthew 23:5). People thought that they were good men, better than most, as they pretended to be holy and pious in their daily lives.

The publicans, on the other hand, were tax-farmers. And since in the course of collecting taxes they were moved by greed and oppressed people to pay their taxes, they were considered sinners. In the parable, Christ used a Pharisee who was considered a good man, and a publican who was regarded as bad to teach us that harm comes from pride and that good comes from humility.

When the holy fathers were preparing the calendar, they realized that of all of the virtues, humility was the most important one in helping us obtain the others. Pride then is the greatest obstacle. They decreed that the parable of the Pharisee and Publican be read to teach us not to pride ourselves in self-satisfaction, nor boast and exaggerate as the

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O Lord and Master of my Life, take from me the spirit of laziness, despair, lust of power and idle talk,

But give rather the spirit of Chastity, Humility, Patience and Love to Thy servant,

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou unto ages of ages. Amen.

—St Ephraim the Syrian

ST. EPHRAIM'S PRAYER

How could a prayer which is so short be so meaningful? Written by St. Ephraim over 1700 years ago, it is as fresh as if it were written yesterday. We are instructed to add it to our daily prayers during Great Lent but many people like to meditate on it all year long. One reader wrote to me that she took her copy to a copy store, had the copy enlarged, and she then had it encased in plastic to protect it. She made several copies, has given them for gifts and keeps several for herself. She uses one as a bookmark in her Bible. Many of you are so resourceful!

Most prayers in Orthodoxy use the plural we or us. This is one of the few that uses me. One other example is the Creed, where we say "I believe."

* * * * * *

The saints constantly teach that there is but one goal in Christian life: the acquisition of the Holy Spirit, or communing with God, finding Grace within ourselves.

THE MEETING

On February 2/15 we find another Holy Day which seems to have many designations in English: Encounter, Presentation, Meeting, etc. In Slavonic it is called Sretenyia which translated would mean meeting. Presentation is used from verse 22 where we read: "...to present Him to the Lord. The word encounter would imply "come together in hostility" and not accurate in today's understanding.

The event is fully documented in Luke 2:22-40, which is the reading for the day. The Meeting is of significance because this is the first meeting of the Lord with his people. Up to this time His birth, the adoration of the shepherds and wise men, had been confined to the small circle of the Holy Family. Here Christ appears in the midst of His people and is recognized as the long-awaited Saviour by Simeon and Anna. There is a tradition that Simeon was one of the 70 learned men to whom was entrusted the translation of the Old Testament from old Hebrew to the then prevailing language, Greek. Simeon was given the task of translating the Book of Isaiah. When he came to the passage in Isaiah 7:14: "And this shall be a sign unto you: a virgin shall give birth to a son, and He shall be called Emanuel, God with us" he deliberated substituting the word "maiden" for "virgin." An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and told him that he would not see death until he held this Child in his arms fulfilling the prophecy.

This is the reason why he said the very beautiful prayer which is prayed at each vesper service: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which

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CHRONOLOGY

FEBRUARY 2007

DIED – Fr. Peter Buletza, retired, in New Jersey. He was a priest in American Carpatho-Russian Diocese.

According to a recent study by the Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion, 20% of Americans believe that the living can communicate with the dead. In an online survey of 10,000 Beliefnet members, 77% said they'd felt the presence of a spirit, angel or dead soul.

The staff and vestments of Metropolitan Philaret, the former first hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia are on their way from a church in Boston to Moscow where they will be handed over to Patriarch Alexius II in fulfillment of the last will and testament of the former primate.

Prior to Pope Benedict's trip to Istanbul, 73 US Senators signed a letter to President Bush expressing "Deep concern that policies of the Turkish government pose a grave threat to the future of the Ecumenical Patriarchate... Seventy-five percent of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's properties have been confiscated by the Turkish government. Beyond this, the Patriarchate's dissolution in the coming decades is essentially inevitable if Turkey continues its policy of prohibiting all 250 million non-Turkish Orthodox Christians from becoming Ecumenical Patriarch."

Metropolitan Herman met with representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia in Syossett on November 20 for conversation about ROCOR's process of reconciliation with the Moscow Patriarchate.

St. Nicholas Parish whose church was destroyed on 9/11 has been given a plot of land on which to build their new church. The plot is on the southwest corner of Greenwich and Liberty Sts. about two blocks east of the original Cedar St. location. Building has to wait until sometime after 2009 because it will be in the vicinity of a $500 million security center under Liberty St. that will screen tour buses and trucks.

The Transcarpathian Oblast Council has again appealed to Ukraine's president, prime minister, and parliamentary speaker to grant Rusyns in the region an official status of ethnic minority (i.e. nationality). Similar appeals were made in 1992 and 2002 and were ignored by officials in Kiev. According to the Dec. 2001 census, 10,069 people in the Transcarpathian Oblast declared themselves to be Rusyns although this nationality is not included in the official register. Since the appeals have begun, the Rusyns have managed to organize some cultural events with official support and have presented their cause on TV in their mother tongue. This year Rusyns have opened 26 Sunday schools where Rusyn language and culture is taught. Rusyns are also found in Slovakia (24,000), Poland (6,000 registered as Lemkos) and in Romania. The Rusyns in the US have an organization the Carpatho-Rusyn Society, 125 Westland Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15217-2538 or 412-462-2769 or http://www.c-rs.org which is doing much to revive Rusyn language and culture in this country and to encourage the Rusyns overseas. If your grands lived in the Austro-Hungarian Empire they were possibly Rusyns.

Hellenic College has a cross-registration agreement with Boston College. This allows students to take one course per semester from the opposite school's catalog which will be fully accredited on their transcripts.

Archbishop Ihor Vozniak of Lviv, Ukraine has denounced the recent ordinations of Lefebvrite supporters. He stated that "none of these new priests and deacons have a right to serve in parishes of the Ukrainian Catholic Church since they were ordained in the Latin rite by an excommunicated bishop." So far two Ukrainian priests and seven deacons were ordained in Warsaw, Poland as members of the Society of St. Pius X which rejects reforms of the Second Vatican Council. They are followers of the late French Archbishop Lefebvre who was excommunicated in 1988. They had been refused the right to ordaine in the Ukraine.

Holy Myrrhbearers Monastery, 144 Bert Washburn Rd., Otego, NY 13825-2265 will celebrate its patronal feast pilgrimage on April 21 and 22. It's 11th Annual Fall Pilgrimage has been scheduled for Saturday, October 13. For further info call 607/432-3179.

In 1954, Congress passed an amendment to the tax code that prohibits tax-exempt churches and charities form being involved in political campaign activity. The amendment has been controversial and confusion surrounds exactly what it proscribes. The IRS has issued guidelines to help churches comply: irs.gov/newsroom/article/O,,id=154712,00.html

Patriarch Alexei I of Moscow in his Paschal message of March 25/April 7, 1949 instructed that the Creek and the Lord's Prayer always be sung congregationally.

"The American church is dying. We are not reproducing Christians. American church growth is typically the transfer of members from one congregation to another, rather than the conversion of the lost," according to Thorn S. Rainer, a Southern Baptist scholar. He also stated that: "Repentance is often avoided as a truth of the Gospel. Hell is rarely mentioned despite the abundance of references in scripture."

(Continued from front page)

NO MORE NUMBERS

Pharisee, but rather that we take him as an example proving to us that the smoke of pride and the rottenness of boasting drive away the grace of the Holy Spirit, stripping us of every virtue and throwing us into the abyss of hell. We should beseech God with awed heart imitating the humility of the Publican through which man is justified and by which he may ascend to sublime heights however low he has fallen in sin.

"O Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us."

(Continued from front page)

THE MEETING

thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

In many churches candles are blessed on this day symbolic of "The light to lighten the Gentiles." – the light to lead all people out of the darkness of sin into light eternal. These candles are used sparingly as in cases of great storms – they are called hromnitsa or thunder candles – when with prayer to God for His protection, those present ask for His mercy. This candle is also lighted when we are ill and are to receive Holy Unction.

Another tradition connected with this Holy Day is the churching of women 40 days after they give childbirth following the example of the Virgin Mary, who brought Her Son to the Temple 40 days after His Birth (Christmas).

SOBORNOST

"Russian" Councils – Continued

On August 15, 1917, following the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II, while the provincial government was in power, the Church convened a council at Moscow, which did not disperse until September of the following year. More than half the delegates were laymen – 314, with bishops and clergy numbering – 250; this was an anomaly in Orthodox conciliar tradition, but, as canon law demands, the final decision on specifically religious issues was reserved to the bishops alone.

The Council of 1917 carried through a far-reaching program of reform, the chief act of which was the abolishment of the synodical form of government and a restoration of the Patriarchate. The election of a new patriarch took place on November 5, 1917. In a series of preliminary ballots, three candidates were selected: Archbishop Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of Kharkov (101 votes), Archbishop Arsenenius of Novgorod (27 votes), and Metropolitan Tikhon (Beliavin) of Moscow (23 votes). The final choice among them was made by lot, and it was Tikhon (who has recently been canonized a saint) who became the new patriarch.

The Council also laid down the ruling that bishops in the Russian church should be elected by clergy and laity. This ruling is followed by the Paris group of Russian Orthodox and the Orthodox Church in American (OCA), but the seven decades of persecution by the communists in what was formerly the Soviet Union had made its application there impossible.

Fr. Michael Dahulich, PhD
Dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary
South Canaan, PA 18459

WINTER'S GRACE

We often hear the statement that "all men are created equal." But we have lived long enough to see that life treats some people better than others. Some of us learn to accept this without resentment while others bemoan the fact that they were shortchanged.

Life's inequities show up in so many ways. Cancer ravages the body of a little child, while a hard-living chain smoker lives to a ripe old age. Some people enjoy good health, others don't. Some have no physical disabilities, others have severe limitations. Some work hard and remain poor, while others are born to wealth or seem to get all the breaks.

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KITCHEN CORNER

lightly with oil or melted butter. Pour just enough blini batter to coat the pan, as thin a layer as possible. Cook over low heat until the underside of the blini is golden. Turn the blini over, and cook it for 15 seconds more. Transfer to a plate, and keep the blini warm while repeating the steps with the remaining batter. Serve the blini stacked.

A very clear answer is given to us in St. John 22:21, 22. We are familiar with the icon of the Last Supper. In it we see that St. John is leaning toward Christ. Peter seeing this is resentful and says to Jesus: "What shall this man do?" It is as if he asks: "Lord, and what shall this one do – this one so loved and loving – this one so highly honored...?"

Peter has shown resentment toward John because he had just been informed that he was going to die as a martyr for his faith and he wanted to know what was going to happen to John. He seemed to think that it wouldn't be fair if John didn't die the same way he did.

Peter was rebuked in a gentle way. "What is that to you?" or in plain words "It's none of your business." Peter had been given his task and responsibility and he was to carry it out.

If looking at others makes you resentful of the unfairness of your life, change your focus. Life's injustices are only for a little while. Perfect fairness will only be ours to find in His Kingdom, as we find the answer in His reply to Peter: "You follow me."

LIGHTER MOMENT

An auto mechanic received a repair order to check a car for a clunking noise heard when it turned corners. He took the car out for a test drive and made two right turns, each time hearing a loud clunk. Back in the shop, he returned the car to the service manager with a note: "Removed bowling ball from trunk."

MAY 17 IS THE DATE

Very detailed plans have been worked out at a joint session of the two Commissions representing the Moscow Patriarchate and the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia in Cologne, Germany on October 26, 2006.

According to the plan, the signing of the Act of Canonical Communion is scheduled to take place on May 17, 2007. It is expected that on this day, when the Orthodox Church celebrates the feast of the Ascension of the Lord, His Holiness Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia and the members of the Holy Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate, and the First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus, along with the members of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, will gather at Christ the Savior Cathedral. After a short moleben, the decrees of the Holy Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate and of the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia on the confirmation of the Act of Canonical Communion will be read aloud, after which the Act itself will be read.

His Holiness the Patriarch and His Eminence the First Hierach will sign the Act, greetings will be exchanged and Many Years then sung.

Immediately following the singing of the Act of Canonical Communion, His Holiness Patriarch Alexy, His Eminence Metropolitan Laurus and the other bishops will conduct Divine Liturgy. During the service, the Royal Doors will be open in the Paschal tradition.

It is untraditional to have the Royal Gates open throughout a Divine Liturgy except during Bright Week, the first week after Easter.

This will be done at this time, so that the people of God can fully participate in the joy of the first Eucharist in the united Russian Church.

A document received by Interfax states that: "By the prayers of the holy new martyrs and confessors of Russia the Lord has blessed the sacred cause of restoring the unity of the Russian Church that had suffered great pain in the 20th century. We believe that through their heavenly intercession we would complete this cause to the glory of God and the joy of church people."

HOPE

The second Sunday in preparation for Great Lent is dedicated to the Prodigal Son with the reading from Luke 15:11-32. This year it falls on February 4. One of the very first prayers for this day tells us: "Our way, O brethren, is to know the power of this mystery; for when the prodigal son ran away from sin hastening to that fatherly refuge, his all-good father welcomed him and kissed him, granting him signs of glory. He celebrated the mystical joy to the celestial ones when he killed the fatted calf, that we might conduct ourselves becomingly toward the Sacrificer, the Father and Lover of mankind, and to the Sacrificed One, the glorious Saviour of souls."

In this parable, the Saviour illustrated three things: the condition of the sinner, the canon of repentance, and the knowledge of God's compassion. The divine Fathers prescribed its reading on this day, following the reading of the Pharisee and the Publican for our instruction; for in the person of the prodigal son we view the wretched condition in which we have been enjoying our sin, remote from God and His undefiled Sacraments. Finally, we become aware of ourselves and awaken, hastening our return to Him through repentance in these days of holy fasting.

The holy Fathers had another purpose. Because some people commit grave sins and inequities (injustices), persisting over a long period of time, they are overtaken by despair thinking that there is no hope of forgiveness. In this way they fall deeper and deeper in committing their sinful acts, even committing worse ones. The holy fathers realizing this, intended to remove the evil of despair from their hearts, encouraging them and reviving their energies for deeds of virtue. The reading of this parable was chosen to illustrate the compassion of the most righteous God, and that no sin may overcome His kindness and His love of mankind however great the sin may be.

"Through thine ineffable love to mankind, therefore O Christ our God, have mercy upon us."

THE DASH

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend. He referred to the dates on her tombstone from the beginning to the end. He noted that first came the date of her birth and spoke of the following date with tears, but he said that what mattered most of all was the "dash" between those years. For that dash represents all the time that she spent alive on earth, and now only those who loved her know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not how much we own: the cars, the house, and the cash. What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash. So think about this long and hard, are there things you'd like to change?

For you never know how much time is left (You could be at dash midrange). If we could just slow down enough to consider what's true and real, and always try to understand the way other people feel. And be less quick to anger, and show appreciation more and love the people in our lives like we've never loved before. If we treat each other with respect, and more often wear a smile, remembering that this special dash might only last a little while. So, when your eulogy's being read with your life's actions to rehash, would you be proud of the things they say about how you spent your dash?

LIGHTER MOMENT

The boss is the one who is early when you're late and late when you're early.

Memories

My Pop, Paul

Today, I remember my pop. I am now elderly and as I sit and reminisce many happy thoughts come to me. My pop and I spent many pleasant times walking in the woods behind our home. One particular time now comes to mind. We were out looking for mushrooms – I wandered a bit away – soon pop called to me, "Erenya (Irene) come and see!" As I came near there was my pop sitting on the ground smiling ever so happily. Among the white birch trees, in a patch of moss, there were lil' red toppers (kozari) perhaps a dozen or more popping out of the bright green moss! Excitedly I hurried to pick them but Pop said, "No donka (daughter) sit awhile and enjoy what God has given us!" What a precious lesson I learned that day.

My pop arrived from the "Old Country" Russia at a very early age of 17. His parents had sent him off for a better life because they were but poor farmers. Pop was very determined to become an American citizen. He studied hard and diligently. I remember helping him to learn the Pledge of Allegiance. I was seven and was learning it at school. It was very difficult for him to pronounce some of the words, although he was fluent in the Russian language. But my pop persevered. The day he received his citizenship was indeed a very happy day! Pop told everyone he met and so proudly showed his papers.

Christmas Eve Supper (Veleya) is a beautiful memory. After supper my pop always went down to the cellar and came up with a bowl of nuts and candy, which we only had at Christmastime. He pretended to trip and spilled all the goodies over the floor. The children scrambled to gather them up because we always knew if we were lucky we'd find a coin or two.

I've had a few glimpses of my pop's clairvoyance. One, however, stands out now in my mind. Keep in mind that television was not yet invented and so as children we were going to our five cent movie matinee, all excited, when pop laughed: 'someday you will have movies right here in your own home!" How very prophetic.

I really marveled at how very musically talented my pop was. He was self-taught as a violinist. He could not read a note of music but just hum a few notes of a melody for him, he would listen, pick it up and play it, oh! so beautifully. As he played the old Russian melodies, tears of joy streamed down his cheeks as he remembered his homeland and the family he left behind so long ago.

His favorite word must have been joy because he expressed it in the simple way of life that he lived. Once in early winter, I remember because there already were traces of snow on the ground, pop came home from his usual walk in the woods and gave mom the most beautiful orange flower. He had found it still blooming in the wind and cold. "This is for you, Mary" he said so lovingly. Can love be expressed in a more poignant way?

My beloved pop died at the early age of 49. He succumbed to emphysema "black lung" as it was called so long ago. I am still living in the same old house that pop and his ol' cronies dug out the foundation for with picks and shovels.

Thank you, dear God for so many precious memories. I'll pause now knowing you, my dear pop, are looking upon me, your blue eyes twinkling, smiling so until we are once more together I'll say – do svendanya!

Irene

Please send your MEMORIES to Margaret Pysarchyk, 2125 Garfield St., Lorain, OH 44055 or at mpysarchyk@hotmail.com

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*Mary Kuyon prayers for health of Matushka Nina

May Almighty God rest the souls of His Servants in the Abode of the saints and may their memories be eternal.

*Mary Speck offered by her husband Joseph.

*John and Catherine Stefura offered by daughter Elizabeth Howe

*Fr. Peter and Matushka Josephine Felenchak and James DiFlorio offered by Olga DiFlorio

**Vladimir (Val) Fryntzko offered by Matushka Nina and Bohush family

*Fr. Basil Stroyen offered by Mary Kuyon

*Nancy Stolar offered by her son-in-law Earl Kopsi

*The parents of Simon and Mary Herbert

*Margaret Hilansky offered by daughter Evelyn East.

If thou, O man, dost not forgive everyone who has sinned against thee, then do not trouble thyself with fasting. If thou dost not forgive the debt of thy brother, with whom thou art angry for some reason, then thou dost fast in vain – God will not accept thee. Fasting will not help thee, until thou wilt become accomplished in love and in the hope of faith. Whoever fasts and becomes angry, and harbors enmity in his heart, such a one hates God and salvation is far from him.

– Venerable Ephraim the Syrian.

* * * * * *

A crucifix differs from a cross in that it carries the figure of Christ crucified, either as a painted or a sculpted corpus.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

There were so many interesting articles in the February 1957 issue which sold for 10¢. Some of them which may be of historical interest showed that parishes were beginning to show interest in spreading Orthodoxy beyond their own parish boundaries. The Madison, Illinois parish decided to form a "Book-of-the-Month" Club. They donated a book every month to one of the seminaries. The parish in Spring Valley, New York voted to make the Alaska Fund of The Orthodox Herald their Mission Project of 1957, while the Pro-cathedral in New York City prepared their children's choir to sing for a holiday program representing one of the four major faiths. Directed by Prof. Nicholas Afonsky the children wore national costumes. A young boy and girl stood at the front of the group holding the traditional illuminated Christmas zvezda/star.

After four years of negotiation with the Veteran's Administration, it approved an Eastern Orthodox Chapel in Hines VA Hospital in Illinois which had about 50 Orthodox vets at the time.

The Sunday Register of December 30, 1956, a Roman Catholic weekly, carried several articles concerning the Orthodox Church. One article read: "A united American Orthodox Church would have 6,000,000 members and be one of the largest denominations in the U.S. This would be a group with clergy of valid orders and using the seven Sacraments but not in union with the Holy See." The other reference was found in the "Ask and Learn" column and also had to do with the validity of Orthodox Orders and Sacraments.

In the name of progress, we learned that the original building which housed the first Orthodox seminary in America which was located in Minneapolis, Minnesota was razed to make way for a new parish community center. The seminary was located across the street from the church.

Perhaps no article in this February 1957 issue shows how much the practices in the church life have changed as the article on Govenie, a practice followed by some prior to receiving Holy Communion. It reads: "Eastern Christians choose usually one of the weeks of Lent for what is called "Govenie". There is no corresponding word in English; Govenie means a period of self-examination, prayer and fasting, which ends with confession and communion. A person who starts Govenie is expected to spend his time as in retreat, though he usually remains at home. He attends all the daily services; he fasts rigorously, reads books or spiritual edification, gives alms, and seeks reconciliation with those with whom he has quarreled. Govenie usually lasts for a week, and it involves real bodily privation."

FUNDS

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It is necessary most of all for one who is fasting to curb anger, to accustom himself to meekness and condescension, to have a contrite heart, to repulse impure thoughts and desires, to examine his conscience, to put his mind to the test and to verify what good has been done by us in this or any other week, and which deficiency we have corrected in ourself in the present week. This is true fasting.

– SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM.

* * * * * *

What keeps us from asking God for help?

Undique (from everywhere)

O Brethen, to keep a spiritual fast, we must tell no lies with our tongues, or give cause of scandal to others, but by repentance let us brighten the lamp of our souls, that with tears we may call to Christ: Forgive us our transgressions, for You love mankind. (from the 2nd week of Great Lent)

The apostle John is the only Bible writer to use the word "antichrist." In two of the letters bearing his name, the word appears five times in both the singular and plural. The verses are 1 John 2,18, 22; 1 John 4:3 and 2 John 1:7.

An icon is said to be written rather than painted because it must be scripturally and dogmatically correct. It is a form of scripture.

Orthodox pray for the dead as a confession of faith in Christ's victory over death and as a declaration of hope in the resurrection of the dead.

After receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the apostles set out for the four corners of the earth bringing the message of salvation. Decades passed before there were any writings which were universally recognized as "Christian Scriptures."

We wish for time to visit our needy neighbors, while wasting our time watching TV.

If we don't prepare ourselves for the Divine Liturgy, we'll likely be lost and bored.

Our society often admires religion so long as it is private and uncontroversial.

The rector of the parish near Mount Vernon related that house guests over the weekend never kept George Washington from attending services. He invited them to accompany him to church, or he went alone.

All seven of the Ecumenical Councils were concerned with a single question: "Who is Jesus"?

Editor's Notes

I have a kyiot in the front of my house. Each morning, on my way to pick up my morning newspaper, I say my morning prayers in front of the icon of our Saviour Jesus Christ. I have a list of people for whom I pray and each morning I add a new name rotating them from the box which contains the Christmas and new Year Greeting cards which I received this year. Last year's cards, will be bundled up and sent to Holy Transfiguration Monastery where they are recycled.

We receive all types of requests. Most we are able to answer. However, we need your help on this one. There is a Sunday School which is planning a project making cookies in the form of St. Herman. Does anyone have information where an appropriate cookie cutter can be obtained?

During much of this month, we are being prepared for Great lent. Many will follow the Church's teachings and give up something and take up something. The time prior to Lent gives us several weeks for a reality check. How far have we strayed? What are we going to do to try to improve? Are we going into Lent with the least amount of disruption of our regular routine or are we going to make a special effort to attend services other than the Divine Liturgy on Sunday. If for some reason we cannot get to church, do we have books with the special services and meditate on them? How about our extra spiritual reading? May we suggest "Awake to Life" this year? It was written by Fr. Alexander Men who was murdered on his way to serve a Divine Liturgy. The book is a collection of his sermons for 18 Sundays from pre-Lent through Pentecost and may be ordered from Oakwood Publications, 3827 Bluff St., Torrence, CA 90505. For info call 800/747-9245.

We have received several inquiries about the number codes on the address labels. Ignore them, they help in the mailing process as they indicate the tray in which they are placed.

I look forward to great Lent with trepidation and yet with joy. Self examination is difficult and a serious matter. Have I spiritually grown during this past year? Have I allowed too much of the world to intrude on my spiritual regime? I do fear the "opening of the books" as we are told will be done on judgment day as we are reminded on meatfare Sunday.

May you have a good Lent so that you will meet the Resurrection.

Matushka Nina

MEMORIAL SATURDAY

On February 10, we observe the first Memorial or Soul Saturday. In preparation for this, we should give our list of those Orthodox relatives and special friends who have died and who we wish to pray for. These lists are called hramote or diptichs. In some parishes, they are kept in a permanent book and must be updated listing those who have passed away the past year. These lists are kept in a book in the Church instead of the family Bible.

We are instructed: "As we believers fulfill today the memorial of those who have fallen asleep, from all time, who lived in true worship, each by name, let us praise the Lord and Saviour, praying to Him with supplication, that they give good answer in the hour of judgment to our God Himself, Who is about to judge the earth, and come to stand at his right hand in joy, in the company of the righteous, in the shining inheritance of the saints and be deserving of his heavenly kingdom.

"O Saviour, Who did buy us men with Thy blood, and deliver us by Thy death from bitter death, and granted us by Thy Resurrection life everlasting, grant rest, O Lord, to all who slumber in true worship who died, whether in the wilderness or in cities, whether on land or sea, or anywhere, to kings, priests, bishops, ascetics, and laymen, of every stature and of every race, and make them worthy of Thy heavenly kingdom."

"Grant repose, O Master Christ, to the souls of those who have preceded us in slumber, in the dwelling places of the righteous, and have mercy upon us; for Thou alone art deathless."



The week prior to Cheesefare Sunday which this year is from February 12-17 is known as Maslinitsa. Traditionally, it was a time for making blini – pancakes using up the dairy products and eggs in the pantry and frig. The recipe I give uses milk but it can be made with cream, buttermilk, kefir, sour cream or any other milk product. The type of flour used can also vary. Blini were also made for women who had just given birth. They were also served at weddings and funerals, so they figured in peoples' lives from birth to death. Traditionally, blini are eaten hot off the griddle with red or black caviar, anchovies, herrings, mushrooms, sardines, sprates, etc. In the US, many people prefer to eat them with jam or syrup as they do regular pancakes.

BUCKWHEAT BLINI

Ingredients

1 cup buckwheat flour
1 cup all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons dry yeast
3 tablespoons butter, melted
2 eggs
3 cups or so of milk
2 tablespoons sugar
Pinch of salt

Preparation: Mix buckwheat flour with a cup of milk. Heat a second cup of milk, and add it to the batter, mixing well. When the batter has cooled, mix in the dry yeast. Let the batter rise until it doubles in size.

Whip the batter with a wooden spoon, adding salt and sugar. Separate the egg yolks from the egg whites. Add the egg yolks, warm melted butter, and the flour to the batter, mixing well. Separately whip the egg whites, and add them to the batter along with additional milk as needed. Allow the batter to rise once again.

Heat a frying pan, and brush it

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YES, JUDGEMENT

Meatfare Sunday falls on February 11 this year. The other designation for this day is Judgement Sunday from the Gospel for this day – Matthew 25:31-46.

We have observed the Sundays of the Pharisee and Publican and of the Prodigal Son where we were given glimpses of God's goodness and His great love for us. Now we are reminded that although He is a loving God, He also is a righteous Judge who will recompense us each according to our deeds or lifestyle.

"The books shall be opened, and the works shall be revealed, the trumpets shall blow, the graves shall open, and all mankind shall rise trembling. Those who have done good shall rejoice with joy, expecting their reward; and those who have done evil shall tremble greatly, moaning and shaking, as they are sent to suffering, separated from the elect."

The last Sunday before Great Lent is Cheesefare or Forgiveness Sunday. The Gospel Reading is from Matthew 6:14-21. On this day we commemorate the expulsion of Adam from paradise. The first commandment given to men was that of fasting. Adam and Eve disobeyed. Not only did they not become gods as they had imagined but they lost the life of happiness and bliss, which they had enjoyed. The holy Fathers put this before us that seeing them and remembering the cause of our fall, and what befell us because of the gluttony of our first two ancestors, and their disobedience, we might strive to return to that ancient glory and happiness by means of fasting and obedience to all the divine commandments.

Home Bible Reading Schedule

FEBRUARY 2007

1. Mark 13:31-14:2
2. Mark 14:3-9
3. Luke 20:46-21:4
4. **Luke 15:11-32**
5. Mark 11:1-11
6. Mark 14:10-42
7. Mark 14:43-15:1
8. Mark 15:1-15
9. Mark 15:20, 22, 25, 33-41
10. Luke 21:8-9, 25-7:33-36
11. **Matt 25:31-46**
12. Luke 19:29-40, 22:7-39
13. Luke 22:39-23:1
14. Joel 3:12-21
15. Matt 23:1-32, 44-56
16. Zech 8:19-23
17. Matt 6:1-13
18. **Matt 6:14-21**
19. Proverbs 1:1-20
20. Proverbs 1:21-33
21. Proverbs 2:1-22
22. Proverbs 3:1-18
23. Proverbs 3:19-34
24. Mark 2:23-3:5
25. **John 1:43-51**
26. Proverbs 3:34-4:22
27. Proverbs 5:1-15
28. Proverbs 5:15-6:3

BIBLE STUDY

As Great Lent starts on February 19 our readings are taken from the Old Testament. I had the choice of readings from Genesis, Isaiah or Proverbs.

However, as I was typing the schedule, I noticed that in the week prior to Great Lent, two readings were also taken from the Old Testament. These are from Joel and Zechariah. Both were Minor Prophets. Perhaps the reading from Joel was chosen because he is identified as non-historical or timeless. It's message is for all time and can be applied anywhere. It leads those who internalize it from suffering and a feeling of deprivation through repentance and prayer to the joy of renewed communion with the merciful Lord.

Zechariah is the 11th of the 12 minor Prophets. The messianic theme is so powerful that New Testament writers used excerpts from it to show that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. Although, the Book of Zachariah is short, it can be divided into two sections. Chapter 1-8 contains eight visions. Our reading is from the eight. In verse 22 we read: "Many peoples and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem."

Most of the readings are taken from Proverbs. The book credited to Solomon. It consists of a collection of moral and religious maxims containing instruction concerning right living. Solomon's chief purpose for writing the book seemed to be to give moral instruction especially to young people. He stresses "The fear of the Lord."

LIGHTER MOMENT

By the time Jim arrived at the football game, the first half was almost over. "Why are you so late?" his friend asked.

"I had to toss a coin to decide between going to church and coming to the game," he replied.

"How long could that have taken you?"

"Well, I had to toss it 14 times."